



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

JUN 27 2013

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

E-19J

Jeff Gray
Superintendent
Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
500 W. Fletcher
Alpena, Michigan 49707

**RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Boundary Expansion – CEQ#20130167**

Dear Mr. Gray:

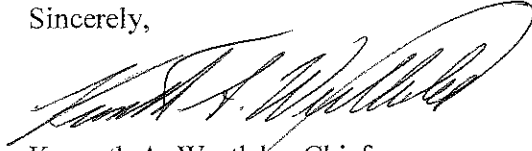
The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has received the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (TBNMS) Boundary Expansion by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The overall goal of the project is to provide long-term protection of additional historic shipwrecks which are of special national significance by expanding TBNMS's current boundaries. This proposed action will benefit the long-term protection and management of the conservation, recreational, research, educational, and historic qualities of the area. NOAA has proposed two action alternatives to meet the project's goals. The DEIS describes the benefits of Alternative C, the Preferred Alternative, which includes the expansion of the current boundary of 448 square miles to an area of 4,300 square miles. This boundary expansion will add 47 known shipwrecks and 60 suspected shipwrecks to the TBNMS area. Furthermore, Alternative C's boundaries will include 32 known shipwrecks and 36 suspected shipwrecks compared to Alternative B, the other action alternative.

EPA reviewed the DEIS pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. EPA has determined that there are no issues that warrant comment. Therefore, EPA is assigning a rating of LO – Lack of Objections.

Please feel free to contact Robert O'Brien of my staff at 312-886-3283 or by e-mail at Obrien.robert@epa.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth A. Westlake", written over a horizontal line.

Kenneth A. Westlake, Chief
NEPA Implementation Section
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

enclosure: ratings summary